



Connecticut Invasive Plants Council

Established by CT General Statute §22a-381

79 Elm Street, 6th Floor, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Public hearing – March 15, 2013
Environment Committee

Presented by Bill Hyatt, Chair, Invasive Plants Council

Raised Senate Bill No. 1016- An Act Regulating the Planting and Sale of Running Bamboo

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill 1016 — An Act Regulating the Planting and Sale of Running Bamboo. The Invasive Plants Council welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

We appreciate the Committee's willingness to raise this bill at the recommendation of the Invasive Plants Council. This proposal, which we strongly support, would address issues of concern to property owners while allowing running bamboo to continue to be sold in the state.

The Connecticut Invasive Plant Council (IPC), established by CGS Sec. 22a-381, meets regularly to address invasive plant issues and review the status of invasive and potentially invasive plants in Connecticut. Since 2010, we have received numerous complaints and associated documentation concerning various species of running bamboo impacting managed landscapes and damaging property. In 2010, the Attorney General's Office requested a review of running bamboo and consideration for its listing as an invasive species. Following a review of available information, the IPC determined that running bamboo did not meet the established criteria provided in CGS Sec. 22a-381b for listing as invasive or potentially invasive. A key point was that running bamboo appears to establish only in areas adjacent to intentional plantings, and does not appear to spread unaided.

At a September 2012 meeting of the IPC, after examining new reports from homeowners, collecting information and observations from state staff, and conducting its own site visits, the Council again found that yellow groove bamboo (*Phyllostachys aureosulcata*), a species of running bamboo, did not meet the criteria for listing as an invasive or potentially invasive plant. The IPC continues to review the relevant literature and investigate reports of running bamboo in Connecticut, but information gathered to-date does not refute our prior conclusions.

However, although running bamboo may not meet the criteria for inclusion on the invasive plant list, the IPC acknowledges that it may grow aggressively and spread

from its point of origin, sometimes crossing property boundaries and establishing in abutting parcels. Once established, these populations frequently cause property damage and can be difficult and costly to control or remove. The IPC, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Invasive Plant Coordinator, and the University of Connecticut Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture have all received letters and phone calls from concerned homeowners regarding control and removal. The Council and others have also received reports of damage to gardens, yards and managed landscapes as a result of bamboo encroachment.

The bill being discussed today would address these bamboo issues in a responsible and appropriate manner. By making property owners who plant running bamboo liable for any damage their bamboo causes to neighboring properties, this bill will encourage personal responsibility and proper maintenance of stands of this fast-growing plant without restricting its sale. The 100-foot setback or container requirement will further reduce the likelihood of spread to neighboring properties.

Education is one of the most important tools in preventing the spread of unwanted plants. Many people may not be aware of the potential for running bamboo to rapidly spread across yards and managed landscapes. The requirement that retail purchasers be notified in plain language about the concerns associated with running bamboo, laws about running bamboo, and appropriate containment measures, would provide the necessary information to better inform the public in their purchasing and management of running bamboo on their properties.

Finally, this bill provides for the clear and effective enforcement of the law in the case of violators.

The problems caused by rampant bamboo growth in yards can be addressed through this proposal without the need to prohibit the plant from sale, list it as an invasive plant, or otherwise restrict its use.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information from the Invasive Plants Council (860-424-3487 or william.hyatt@ct.gov).